CRAIG INTERAGENCY DISPATCH CENTER
2002 YEAR-END REPORT

The year 2002 proved to be a year of many firsts for the Craig Interagency Dispatch Center. It began with the dispatch center being fully staffed, which enabled everyone to abide by the 2:1 work/rest and R&R guidelines without impacting the Center's ability to provide services. The USFS and the NPS both provided seasonal dispatchers, bringing staffing up to a total of seven. Night dispatch was primarily staffed by personnel from the local BLM and USFS offices who committed to one-week assignments.

The fire season started out rather benignly with the first fire occurring on April 1st. The Center experienced 43 multi-fire days, with the maximum fires for one day at 14. We provided initial and extended attack support on 226 fires for approximately 54,000 acres (the 10 year average is 347 fires for 17,735). Seven of those fires were declared Wildland Fire Use and burned 6,155 acres. The first of many team fires began 10 days before the area's normal "busy" fire season, and the last team departed in October along with fire season.

The Center supported two Type 1 teams (a first), six Type 2 teams, and 15 Type 3 fires as well as 4 fire use teams and 6 buying teams. Another noteworthy first is the fact that the Forest burned more acres than the other agencies combined. The largest of these was the Mt. Zirkel Complex consisting of the Burn Ridge fire and the "never say die" Hinman fire. Both of these fires exhibited extreme fire behavior and crossed over the Continental Divide (another first), thus precipitating the Type 1 team order. It proved to be a logistical challenge, at one point requiring a camp set up on both sides of the divide. Also adding complexity to the logistical function was the fact that a large portion of the complex was in wilderness area and the blowdown (déjà vu Mad Creek?).

The Center dealt with 676 incident actions which included wildfire suppression, prescribed fire support, wildfire use support, burned area rehabilitation, support of the wild horse, wilderness, and wildlife programs, flight following for the USFS regional bug flight, public assists, and 88 flight requests.

The Center processed a total of 4235 Resource orders for Overhead, Crews, Equipment, and Aircraft (supplies are not included in this total), surpassing the previous 4 years combined by over 1000 orders. The increase in orders can be attributed to the number of teams that came through the Dispatch Center this past year.

A type 3 helicopter was ordered in early June on Severity and was released in mid September. It was used extensively for initial attack as well as supporting many of the large fires. This was necessary due to the inability to fill air resources quickly for those incidents. An additional SEAT was also staged in Craig for approximately one month, and proved to be a valuable resource in conjunction with the local SEAT based in Craig. Our ability to provide needed resources to initial and extended attack fires, as well as type 3 incidents was made possible due to the willingness of the type 1 and type 2 teams to share these scarce resources. Several incidents were kept at a type 3 because those teams loaned critical air and crew resources.

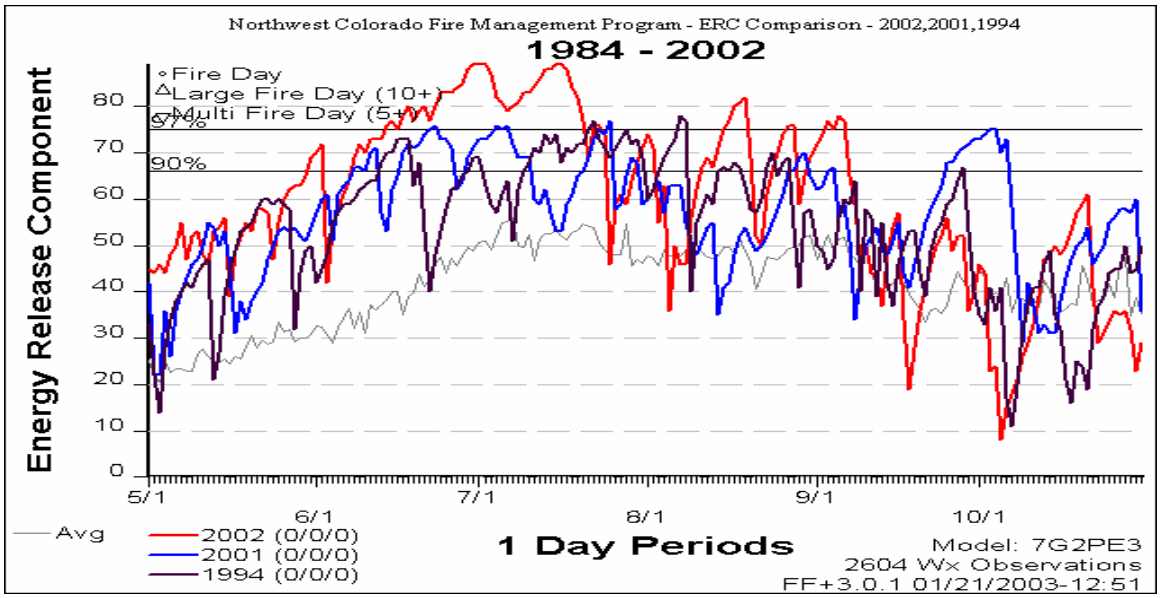
Expanded Dispatch was in place for about three months. During that time several trainees received excellent experienced at all levels in the dispatch organization. A few task books were signed off for Support Dispatcher and Supervisory Dispatcher (not to mention there are a few more names added to the "Craig Name Request Dispatch List"!).

Even though this season exhibited events out of the norm for the Craig Dispatch Center (such as surpassing previous seasons in acres burned, fire intensity and behavior, number of resources mobilized, etc), it is anticipated that due to the severe drought, bug killed timber, blowdown, and the lightning history in this area that a season like this could easily be repeated for the next few years…so sit down, hang on, and enjoy the ride!

Fuels and Weather

Energy Release Component (ERC) is used within the Northwest Colorado Fire Management Program as an indicator of fire season severity. As an index, ERC depicts weather trends that affect the moisture levels in dead fuel and vegetation. For our purposes it describes dryness in a format that has a more stable tendency than the other indices and relates to dryness in fire weather as well as fuels. Figure 1 displays the ERC index for the past fire season in comparison with 2001 and 1994, both known dry and active fire years. Average worst conditions are displayed above the 90th percentile for weather data years of 1984 through 2002 during a fire season of May 1st through October 31st. The 90th percentile represents an ERC of 67 on the index. Of the 184 weather days recorded in fire season 2002, 77 were at or above the average worst condition, this equates to 42% of the fire season days in a state most likely to burn. No other year in the past decade exceeded this percentage.

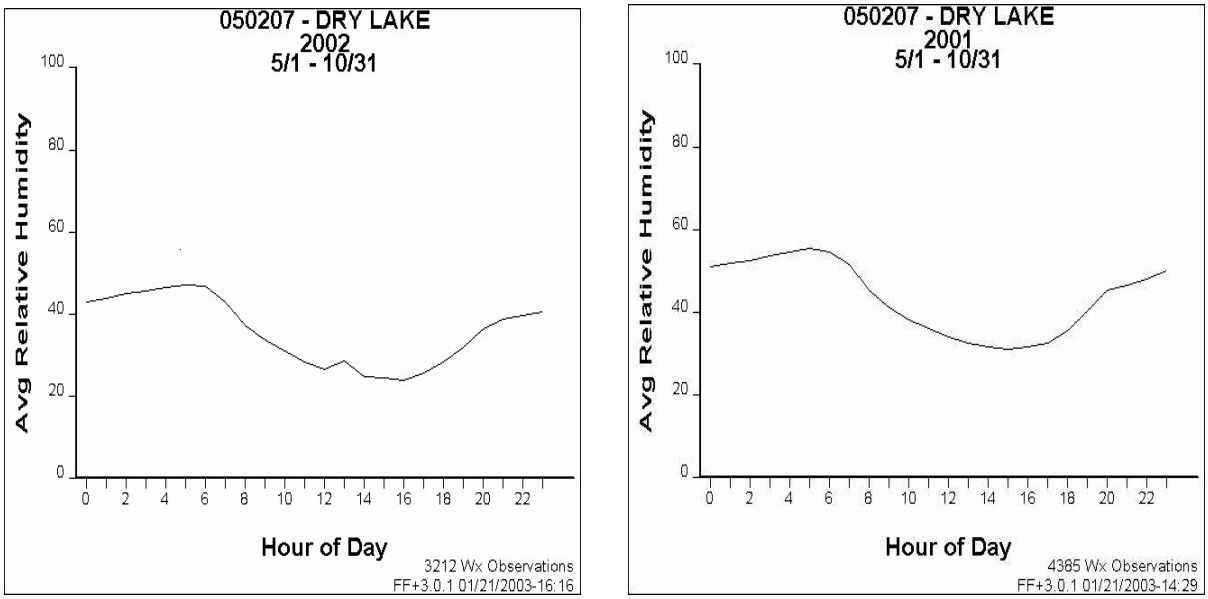
Figure 1



As in 2001, 2002 saw little to no spring moisture. This relatively non-existent spring moisture coupled with rapid run-off allowed the ERC to peak earlier and higher than in 2001, which until this year had provided benchmarks in terms of maximum indices early in the fire season. When moisture was received, during what is considered the typical monsoon period, it was close to normal but could never provide relief from the dry winter and lack of spring moisture. It was typical to see ¼ to ½ inch of rain with associated lightning, 2 to 3 days of drying and than large fire runs or numerous starts from holdovers. Intensities exhibited where as if moisture had been absent all season. This was typical of the activity of the large fires occurring in the higher elevations of the program area, including the Mt. Zirkel Complex, Green Creek Fire and Lost Lakes Fire Use.

The fuel structure of the mature and over-mature stands contributed significantly to the ability of fire spread, particularly in the high country. The mosses and lichen development in the stands provided the heat energy to easily ignite the already stressed and dry needle foliage despite any moisture that may have been received. Similarly, the ongoing beetle epidemic provide aerial fuels that would receive no benefit from the precipitation events that where recorded. Another particularly interesting feature of the 2002 fire season was the overnight RH recovery; it was consistently very low for long periods of time. In Figure 2 below, we can see that in the early morning hour's RH recovery was considerably less than the 2001 fire season. This was a significant contributing factor that provided more receptive fuel beds to fire starts as well as no relief for on going incidents.

Figure 2



Benchmarks were reached in both ERC's and recorded fuel moistures. Fuel moistures were drier earlier and indices were at or above worst-case conditions for longer periods than at any time in the past decade. A total of 47,910 acres were burned during the 2002 fire season program area wide. Of special mention would be the numerous fire use fires that totaled an additional 6154 acres. In particular, the Lost Lakes Fire Use would probably not have been possible without the benchmark fuel and weather conditions that the 2002 fire season brought.

Fuels Projects

Incident Name	BLM			USFS	NPS	FWS	State/ DOW
	Mech	Burn	Total				
Lobo/China Wall	24	61	85				
East Douglas Rx		765	765				
Texas Mtn. Rx		70	70				
School Gulch	11		11				
Elk Springs Fuels Projects	5		5				
Magnolia Bench Rx			0				
Big Duck Rx		577	577				
Swift Dixie Harrow	435		435				
Wilford Dixie Harrow	300		300				
Silver Spur Dixie Harrow	425		425				
Lewis 2-4D Treatment	200		200				
Great Divide Fuels	2972		2972				
Lewis 2-4D Joint Treatment	440		440				
Cedar Mtn. Fuels Project	50		50				
Owl Mtn. Rx							130
Pearl Park Rx					165		
Jacobson Draw Slash		92	92				
Beaver Creek/Radium Rx				150			
Oak Ridge Rx							50
Redwash RX							
Totals:	**4862**	**1565**	**6427**	**150**	**165**		**180**

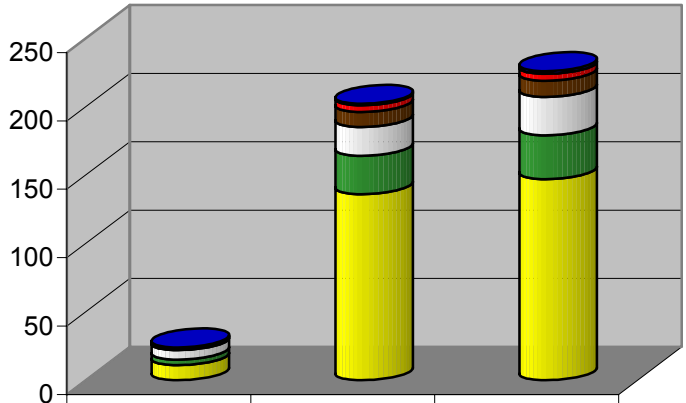
Wildland Fire Use Projects

Incident Name	Start Date	# Of Days Active	BLM	USFS	Private
LOST LAKES	07/13/02	109		5536	
ALLRED PEAK	09/12/02	17			0.30
SUMMIT SPRINGS	08/30/02	6	0.10		
MORALES	08/29/02	7	0.10		
TEXAS CREEK	09/02/02	16	7.70		
BULL TRAIL	08/31/02	10	10.50		
HALO	08/21/02	20	599.80		
TOTALS		185	618.20	5536	0.30
				Total Acres	**6,154.50**

Lost Lakes WFU, by Kari Brown

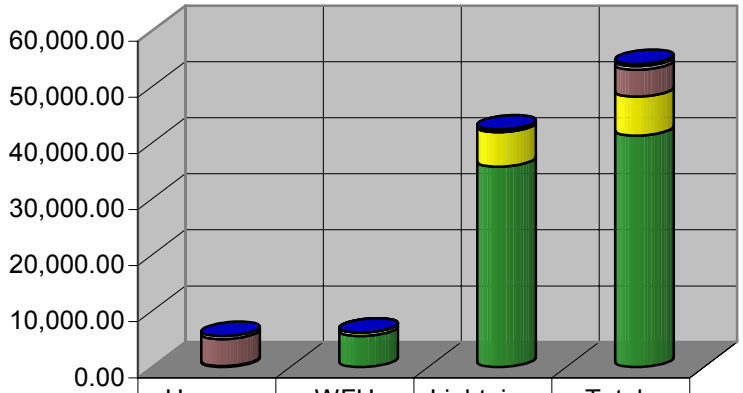
CRC Fire Statistics

Number of Fires per Agency by Cause



	Human	Lightning	TOTALS
FWS	1	1	2
State/DOW	0	5	5
NPS	1	11	12
Private	7	21	28
USFS	4	28	32
BLM	11	136	147

Acres Per Agency by Cause



	Human	WFU	Lightning	Totals
FWS	17.20	0.00	0.20	17.40
State/DOW	0.00	0.00	416.80	416.80
Private	538.70	0.30	96.40	635.40
NPS	4,799.00	0.00	2.65	4,801.65
BLM	181.95	618.20	6,123.15	6,923.30
USFS	0.40	5,536.00	35,737.70	41,274.10

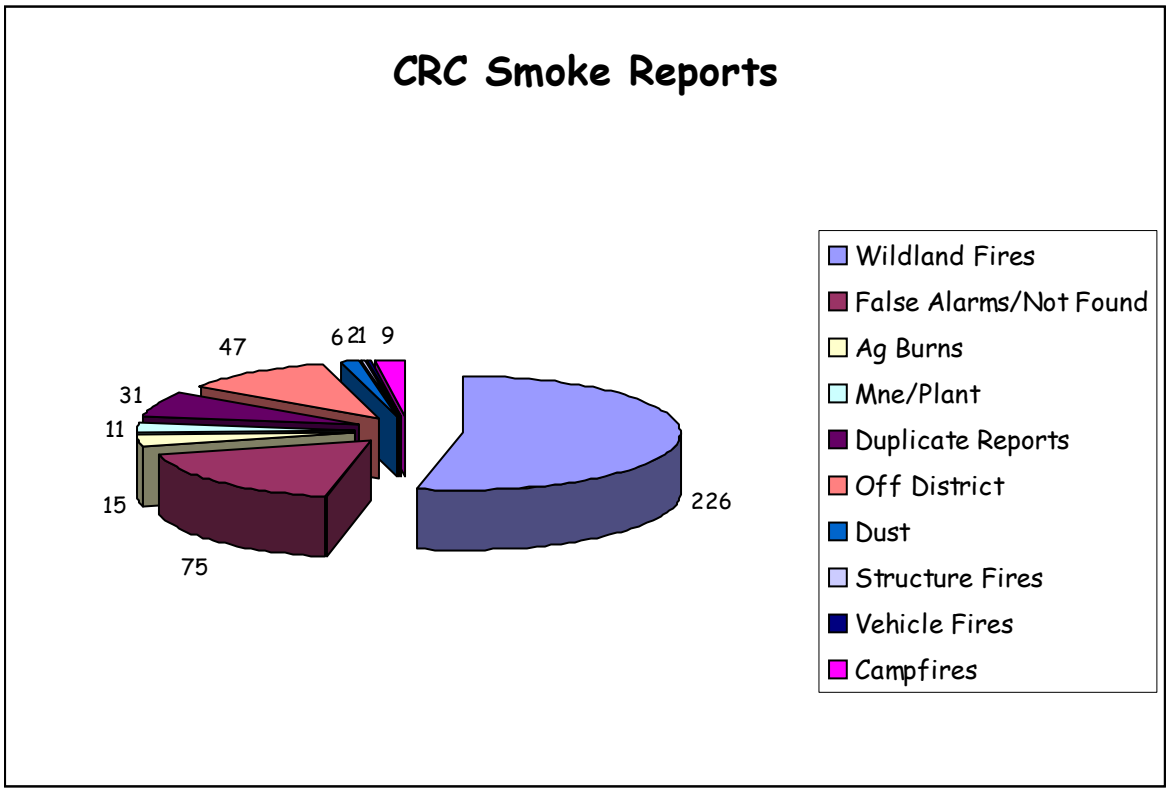
CRC Fire Statistics

Cause	BLM		USFS		NPS		FWS*		State		Private		Totals	
	#	Ac	#	Ac	#	Ac	#	Ac	#	Ac	#	Ac	#	Ac
Human	11	181	4	.4	1	4799	1	17.2	-	-	7	539	24	5536.6
Lightning	136	6123	28	35,737	11	2	1	.2	5	416	21	96	202	42,374.2
RX	5	1565	1	150	1	165	-	-	-	-	1	-	8	1880
Mech Fuel	10	4862	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	130	-	-	11	4992
WFU	5	618.2	1	5536	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	.30	7	6154.5
Totals	167	13,349.2	34	41,423.4	13	4966	2	17.4	6	546	30	635.3	252	**60,937.3**

*Note: FWS, BPR had 1 Human fire and ARR had 1 Lightning fire.

Hinman Fire, Routt National Forest

Incident Actions Summary



Historical Incident Actions

2002	2001	2000	1999	1998
676	737	798	459	N/A

2002 Large Fire Summary

Incident	Start Date	Final Acres	State & Unit	Team(s) Name	Team Type
Banty	06/09/02	676	CO-WRD	Harris	3
Bear	06/27/02	4800	CO-DSP	Chrisman	2
Pinyon Ridge	06/22/02	2141	CO-WRD	Chrisman	2
Hinman 1 & 2	07/12/02	16,852	CO-RTF	Garcia, Bennett, Gelobter	3,2, 1
Lost Lakes	07/13/02	5536	CO-RTF	Cook, Cones, Et al	FUMT
Green Creek	07/14/02	4400	CO-RTF	Cook, Sandman, Hartman, Beckerman, Et al	2
North Barcus	07/30/02	3906	CO-WRD	Andersen	3
McAndrews	08/10/02	169	CO-WRD	Yeager	4
Burn Ridge	08/12/02	14,403	CO-RTF	Skidmore, Sisk, Bennett, Gelobter	3,2,1
Halo	08/21/02	599.8	CO-LSD	None	WFU

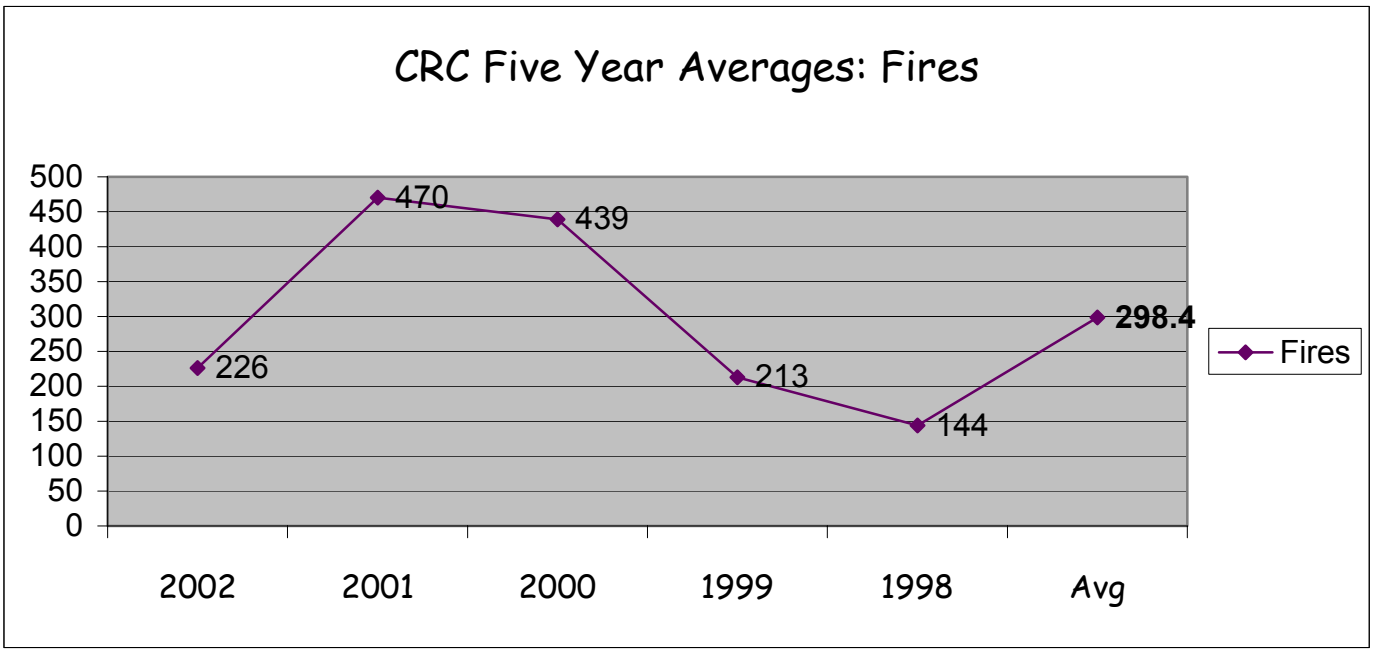
2002 IMT Summary

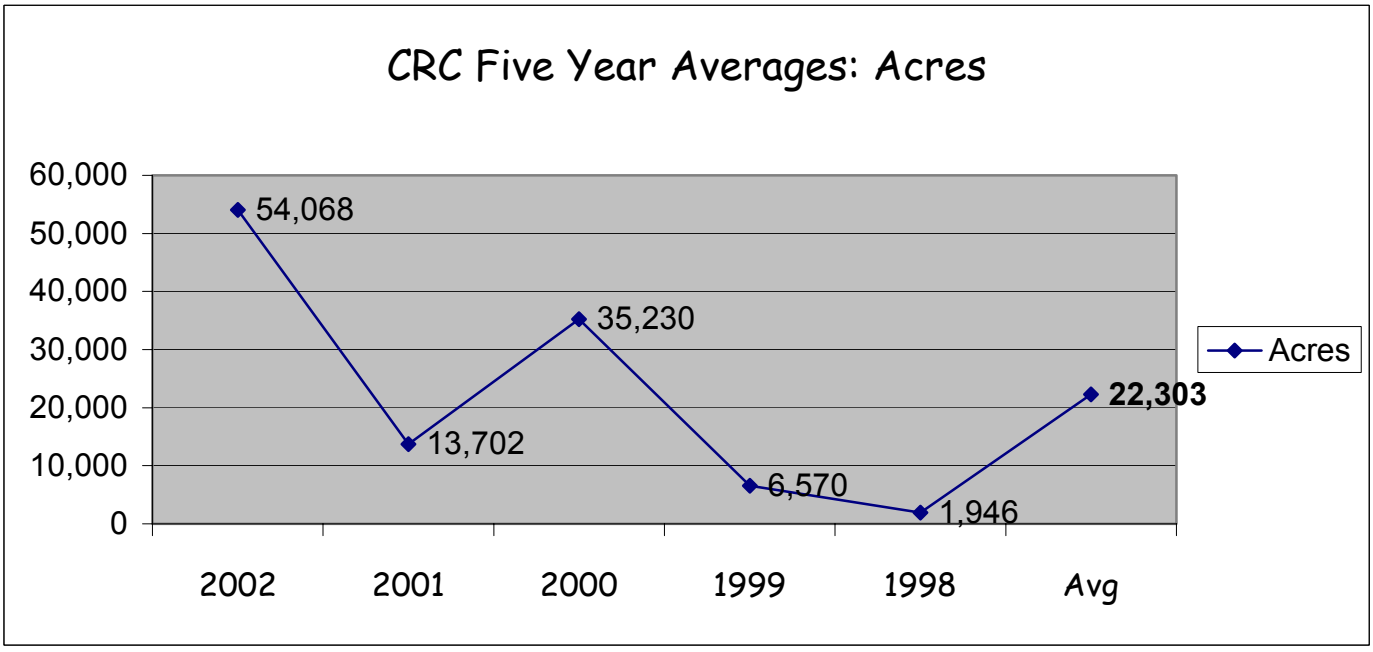
	Type 1	Type 2	Type 3	FUMA	Buying
BLM		1*	3		1*
USFS	2	4	11	4	4
NPS		1*	1		1*
FWS					
State/Private					
Total	**2**	**6**	**15**	**4**	**6**

*Note:

Chrisman's IMT2 handled both the Pinyon Ridge & Bear Fires, same with the buying team.

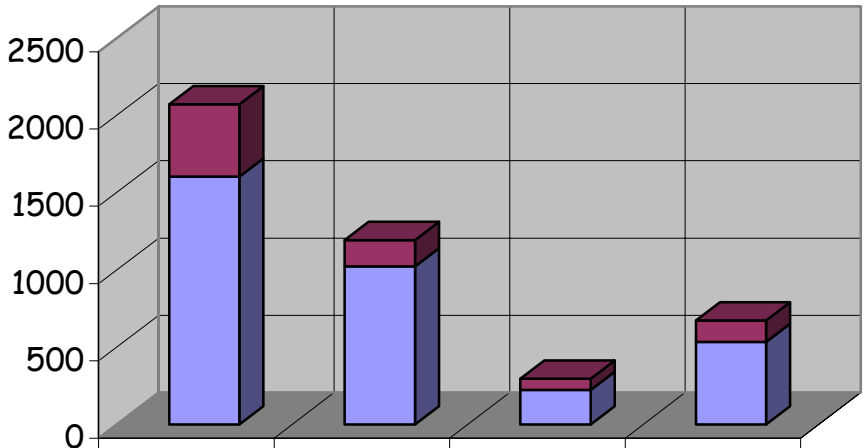
5-Year Averages: Fires and Acres





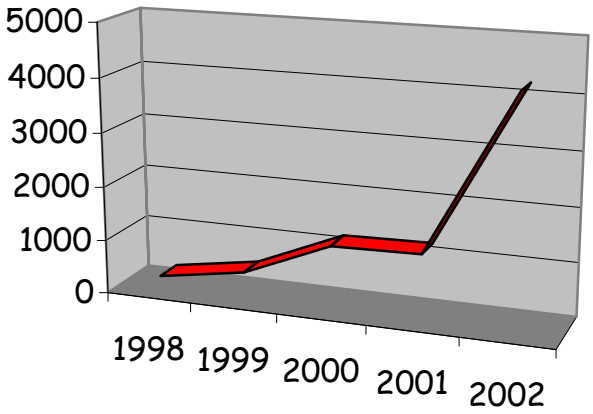
CRC Resource Order Statistics

2002 Resource Requests



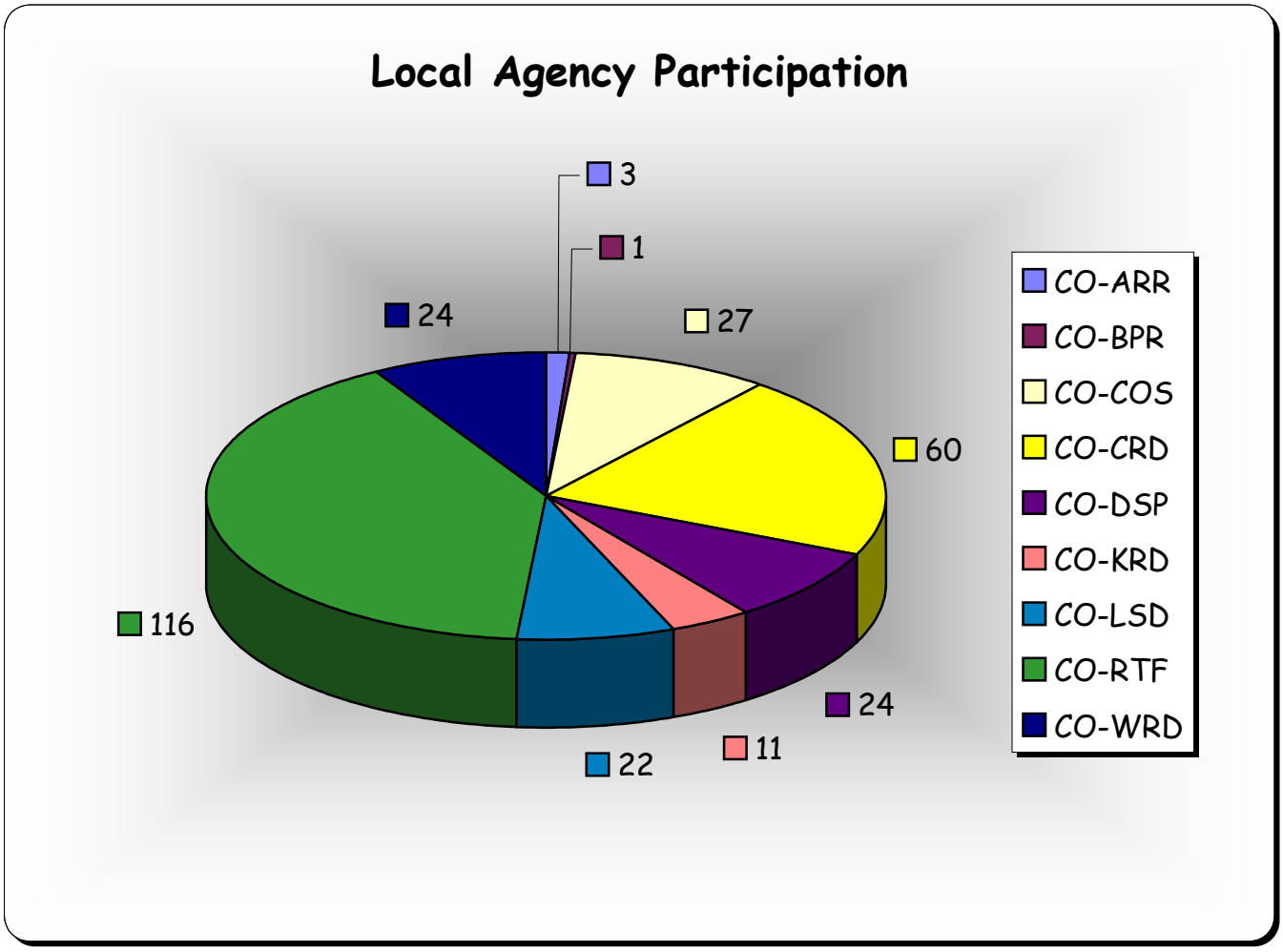
	Overhead	Equipment	Crews	Aircraft
Unfilled	469	169	74	139
Filled	1603	1024	223	534

Resource Order Requests Processed



	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Total	257	518	1196	1234	4235

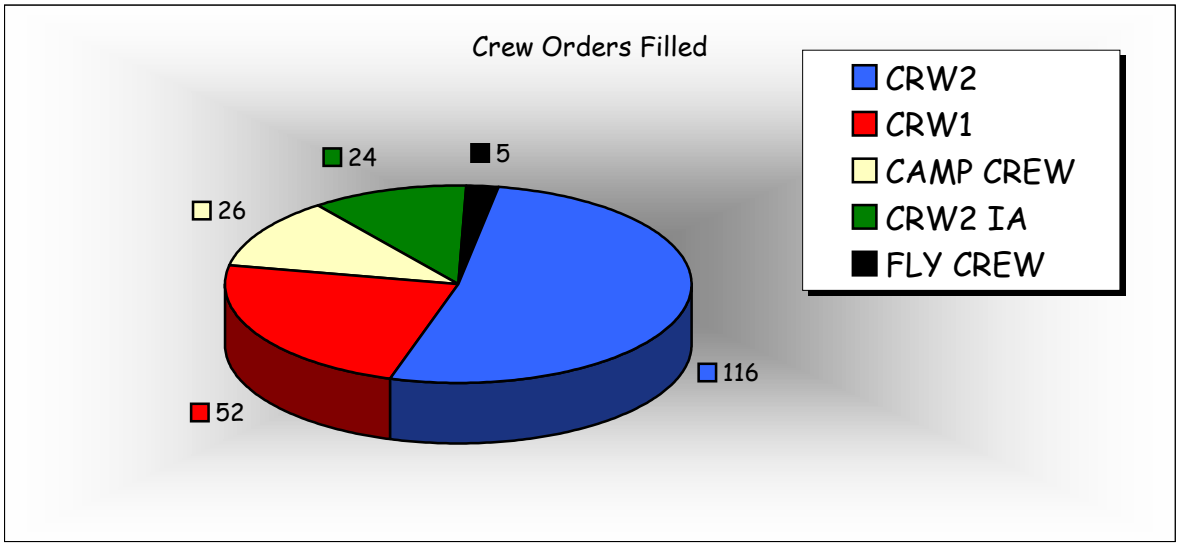
Overhead Summary



2002 Resource Order Statistics Workload
By Unit
(Including UTF's & CX)

	WRD	LSD	KRD	RTF	DSP	BPR	CRC	COUNTIES/ STATE	TOTAL
Overhead	105	0	0	1345	156	5	205	11	1827
Crews	35	1	0	182	16	0	6	3	243
Equipment	95	1	0	897	119	5	24	17	1158
Aircraft	156	13	2	407	32	1	21	8	640
TOTALS	**391**	**15**	**2**	**2831**	**323**	**11**	**256**	**39**	**3868**

Crew Summary



223 Crew Orders Processed

	Local	Regional	National
Type 1	41	10	1
Type 2's	128	11	1
Camp	26	0	0
Fly Crew	5		
TOTALS	**200**	**21**	**2**

Craig Hotshots, Type 1 Crew

The Craig Hotshots were on fires for 79 days on 11 assignments, 9 out of CRC Zone and 1 out of region (national).

Yampa Valley Interagency Type 2 Crew

The Yampa Valley Crews were dispatched 19 times. They had 11 assignments out of the CRC Zone and 1 National assignment to California. On several occasions we were able to fill 2 crews at a time.

Craig Fire Ants Camp Crew

The Craig Fire Ants, comprised of high school students and parent leaders were used on several Type 2 and 1 incident's, including Pinyon Ridge/Bear and Mt Zirkel. The pilot project was very successful and the crews received high praise from the teams they worked with.

Historical Crew Usage within CRC Zone

(Includes local and visiting crews, type 1 & 2)

Year	Number of Crews	Number of Days
1995	10	40
1996	37	146
1997	1	5
1998	17	83
1999	23	Not Available
2000	71	228
2001	93	342
2002	135	1051

* Note change in length of assignment from 21 days to 14 days beginning in 2000.

Tatanka Hotshots on the Mt. Zirkel Complex, by Kari Brown

Equipment Summary

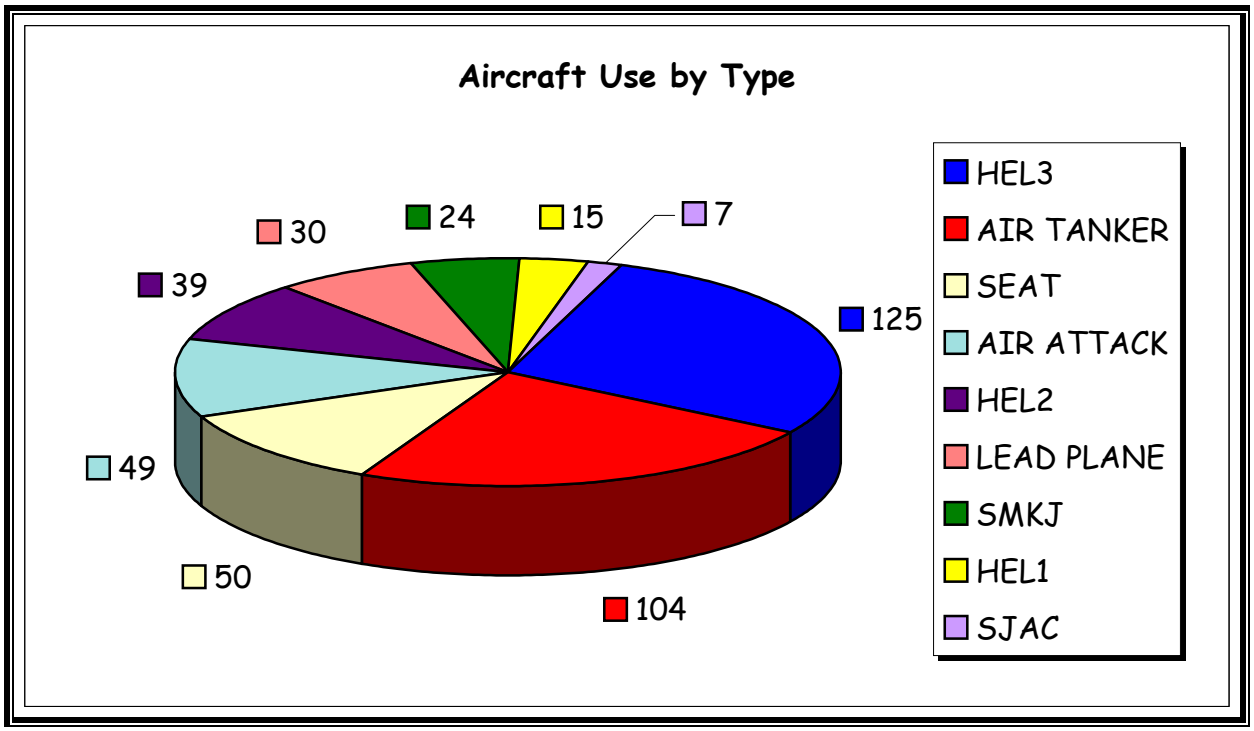
Engine Orders: 161 Engine orders were filled
Despite the busy fire season within CRC's area several agencies were able to send engines off unit.

Home Unit	Engine #	Ordered to
CO-DSP	E-681	CO-PSF
CO-CRD	E-612*	CO-PSF
CO-CRD	E-415	SD-BKF
CO-CRD	E-416	CO-WRF
CO-RTF	E-617	WY-MBF2
CO-RTF	E-617	WY-MBF1
CO-BPR	E-610	WY-RSD

* Crew Swapped out after 14 days.

Photo by Kari Brown

Aircraft Summary



In addition 88 Flight Requests (Recon, Grouse Flights, etc) were processed and 3 charter flights for emergency demobs were procured.

Historical SMKJ Activity

(From GJC, #of Jumps)

UNIT	2002	2001	2000
CRD	-	36	27
WRD	20	See CRD	See CRD
LSD	8	See CRD	See CRD
RTF	37	0	13
MFX	2		
TOTAL	67	36	40

Historical SEAT Usage

(Number of Orders)

2002	2001	2000	1999	1998
50	19	5	5	4